Title: OER Student Specialists - Supporting and Sustaining OER at the Community College Level

Extended Abstract (1000 word max, Submitted as PDF):

College of the Canyons, located in California, about 30 miles north of downtown Los Angeles, is part of the largest system of higher education in the United States (California Community College system of 116 colleges serving more than 2.1 million students). This college is an early adopter of OER and pioneered a program in which students were hired to become OER specialists who support faculty with OER adoption and creation. This eventually became an “OER Team" that supports all OER efforts at their campus, which has resulted in six Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) degree pathways, and the development of over 30 OERs authored by COC faculty.

As College of the Canyons began publicizing their efforts at conferences, their work was picked up on by conference attendees from Paradise Valley Community College, a college that is part of the Maricopa Community College District, located in a suburb of Phoenix, Arizona. Paradise Valley began a similar program at their own institution. As an example of their work, student specialists helped faculty create a complete OER textbook! A sister college in the Maricopa district, Scottsdale Community college, learned of the work done at both schools and soon implemented a program of their own. At this college, student specialists have helped facilitate creation and development of OER materials.

The beauty of these projects is that while each institution now has a “team” of specialists, the programs at each college were developed in slightly different ways and now continue to operate in different ways. Our session aims to share ideas about how these programs were developed and evolved at each college, and how an OER Student Specialist or OER Team program could be developed at other institutions, based on their unique culture or needs. Programs like these ultimately support the UNESCO OER Recommendation of nurturing the creation of sustainability models for OER.

The interactive activity session we are proposing would have two key elements. The first element would be the Presentation. Our presentation will be an uploaded pre-recorded video describing what worked and didn’t work in the development of our OER Student Specialist programs, and what is still working and what we are still learning as the program ages.

The second element would be an asynchronous forum. The forum will allow online conference attendees from different regions of the globe and time zones to engage in discussion around lessons we learned at our colleges, and lessons attendees may have learned in their own experiences at their own institutions. The goal of the forum is also to create a space for online conference participants to form collaborative partnerships with us and with each other around shared areas of interest and planning collective action regarding implementing the OER Student Specialist model at their own institutions.